

Message Text

SECRET

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ORIGIN SS-25

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O P 130235Z SEP 77 ZFF4
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT NIACT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS NIACT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV NIACT IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY

S E C R E T STATE 218559

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, MILI, PBOR, IS, LE, SY

SUBJECT: SOUTH LEBANON

REF: TEL AVIV 6846

1. WE ARE DISAPPOINTED WITH ISRAELI RESPONSE (REFTEL).
WE WILL NEED, HOWEVER, PROMPT ANSWERS TO CERTAIN QUESTIONS BEFORE WE DECIDE UPON NEXT STEPS.
2. FOR BEIRUT: IF BOUTROS OR SARKIS ASKS YOU ABOUT ISRAELI RESPONSE, YOU SHOULD SAY SIMPLY THAT A FINAL, DEFINITIVE ANSWER HAS NOT BEEN OBTAINED AND THAT WE ARE STILL CONSULTING WITH ISRAEL. WITH OR WITHOUT CONSULTING
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WITH BOUTROS, HOWEVER, WE NEED YOUR BEST ESTIMATE OF WHETHER A MORE EXTENSIVE PALESTINIAN WITHDRAWAL IS NEGOTIABLE UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES. PLEASE FACTOR IN YOUR ESTIMATE OF SYRIAN WILLINGNESS TO PRESS FOR A MORE EXTENSIVE WITHDRAWAL AS SEEN FROM THE BEIRUT PERSPECTIVE. IF IN YOUR JUDGMENT THE LEBANESE COULD NOT NOW TRY TO NEGOTIATE A MORE EXTENSIVE WITHDRAWAL, PLEASE COMMENT ON POSSIBILITY THAT

LEBANESE (AND SYRIANS) COULD BE INDUCED TO TRY TO NEGOTIATE MORE EXTENSIVE WITHDRAWAL AFTER A FIRST-STAGE WITHDRAWAL OF THE KIND ALREADY OUTLINED. ALSO COMMENT WHETHER KHOURY DISCUSSIONS WITH ISRAELIS UNDER ILMAC GUISE MIGHT OFFER

MORE PROMISING AVENUE TO SECURE ISRAELI COOPERATION, COMPLEMENTING U.S.-ISRAELI EXCHANGES. ON THIS POINT, PLEASE NOTE TIME PRESSURES SUCH AS CONTEMPLATED BEGINNING OF CEASEFIRE AND WITHDRAWAL, ETC. FINALLY, WOULD APPRECIATE ANY INFORMATION RE ABU IYAD'S REPORTED ASSERTION THAT ALL FEDAYEEN BROUGHT INTO LEBANON SINCE APRIL 1975 HAVE NOW LEFT.

3. FOR DAMASCUS: WE ARE PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN PROBABLE SYRIAN REACTION TO ANY SUGGESTION WE MIGHT MAKE THAT A MORE EXTENSIVE WITHDRAWAL BE NEGOTIATED. GIVEN THAT THE SYRIANS WOULD PROBABLY JUDGE THAT WE HAD NOT PRESSED THE ISRAELIS HARD ENOUGH TO COOPERATE, WOULD THEIR DISAPPOINTMENT UNDERMINE OUR CREDIBILITY WITH THEM IN OTHER RESPECTS? WE WOULD ALSO APPRECIATE ANY INFORMATION DEVELOPED ON EXTRACTION OF FEDAYEEN UNITS INTRODUCED INTO LEBANON AFTER APRIL OF 1975.

4. FOR TEL AVIV: WE ARE NOT SURE WE UNDERSTAND WEIZMAN'S STATEMENT THAT ISRAEL IS PREPARED "TO OFFER AN IMMEDIATE CEASEFIRE," NOR BEGIN'S IDEA OF ATTEMPTING
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TO "IMPOSE AN IMMEDIATE CEASEFIRE TO STOP THE BLOODSHED PENDING FURTHER ISRAELI CONSIDERATION OF THE SITUATION" (TEL AVIV 6687). DOES THIS MEAN THEY WOULD FORCE THE CHRISTIAN MILITIAS TO STOP FIRING? COULD THE ISRAELIS BE PERSUADED TO ACCEPT A LEBANESE PROMISE, CONVEYED THROUGH US OR DIRECTLY IN ILMAC MEETINGS, THAT THE LEBANESE WOULD TRY TO NEGOTIATE A FURTHER, MORE EXTENSIVE PALESTINIAN WITHDRAWAL AT A LATER TIME. VANCE

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